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JOSEPHUS AND CHRISTIANITY

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The importance of Josephus for Christianity has been acknowledged from the beginning. The apologists cite him as an authority; Jerome and many later writers number him among the ecclesiastical authors. In the Peschitto manuscript in the Ambrosiana Library at Milan the sixth book of his history of the Jewish war is included in the Bible under the name of the Fifth Book of Maccabees. How diligently he was read also in the West is shown by Bishop Amulo's complaint (ninth century) that, owing to the study of his works, the Bible itself was neglected. Already in the fourth century a free Latin translation of the work mentioned above had been made; in the sixth century his works were again, and this time correctly, translated. During the Middle Ages translations were made into French, Italian, Spanish, and German; later, into English and Dutch, and lastly into Swedish and Russian. The first English edition (to mention this only) was made by Th. Lodge, in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Only a hundred years ago the German translation of Josephus, printed with illustrations, was a favorite book for Sunday reading in the home; and the well-known Strassburg theologian, Ed. Reuss, was accustomed to recall many scenes of Jewish history as he had seen them represented in the woodcuts of that book.

But the scientific study of Josephus' works did not begin until the eighteenth century. In 1720 Fr. Wocken, corrector at New Stettin, gave (according to the title of his book) "an example of the use one might make of Josephus and his style in explaining the Holy Scripture, and especially the New Testament." In 1741 the Zürich theologian F. B. Ott wrote his *Extracts from Flavius Josephus, for the Explanation of the New Testament*. But the most important publication is that of F. T. Krebs, corrector of the Fürstenschule at Grimma, who, according to the manner of his time, in 1755 edited a work entitled *Observations upon the New Testament from Flavius*

Josephus. There has been no lack of books and treatises upon the writings of Josephus since the eighteenth century revival of interest in them. But a special treatise dealing with the importance of Josephus for Christianity has not, as far as I know, been published during the last one hundred and fifty years.

Instead of this, a special question, to which Ott had already given attention, has often been discussed—the question of a literary relation between Josephus and certain writings of the New Testament. Ott came to the conclusion that the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts must have been known to Josephus; and only fifty years ago the Roman Catholic theologian Aberle, at Tübingen, arrived at the same conclusion. But Keim reversed this statement, and many German, French, Dutch, and English scholars have shared his opinion; of the English I mention Walter Cassels, author of *Supernatural Religion*, and Edwin Johnson, author of *Antiqua Mater*, as well as James Martineau. Nevertheless, I think that dependence upon Josephus, or upon one of his authorities, can be proved only in two passages of the Acts. I will refer to these later. I shall not at all discuss the question whether, as was thought by the excellent American theologian, Ezra Abbot, the second epistle of Peter depends on Josephus. Hitzig held to a dependence of the Epistle to the Hebrews on Josephus, but Holtzmann was right in rejecting this view.

I shall here confine myself to compiling what we can learn from Josephus for the interpretation of the New Testament. First, I shall discuss those places where he speaks, or seems to speak, of Christ himself. Then I shall cite those which refer to other persons or events mentioned in the New Testament. Finally, so far as the length of my paper admits, I will show how great a number of other passages receive an explanation by Josephus.¹

I

At this time² lived Jesus, a wise man—if we really may call him a man. For he was a performer of miracles, and a teacher of those who with joy accepted the truth, and attracted many Jews and also Greeks. He was the Christ. And when our chief men accused him, Pilatus condemned him to die on the cross.

¹ My citations are from the Niese edition of Josephus' works. The numbers in brackets mark the verses noted by him, besides the books, chapters, and paragraphs.

² So we read in the *Antiquities*, XVIII, 3, 3 [63 f].

Yet those who had loved him from the first did not leave him, for after three days he appeared before them alive, after the divine prophets had foretold this and a thousand other wonderful facts about him. And to this day the generation has not failed of those who after him are called Christians.

Ever since the time of Eusebius, even throughout the Middle Ages, this passage has been quoted without a doubt of its authenticity. It was not till the sixteenth century that criticism of the passage arose; the criticism was sharply refuted. For instance, A. Whelock, professor of oriental languages at Cambridge, wrote as follows: "I would as soon let Josephus be wholly lost to the world as allow the Christian church to be deprived of that jewel." And even in the last few years Roman Catholic authors, especially the Jesuit Kneller, have defended the authenticity of the whole passage. But other scholars, among them the historians Ranke and von Gutschmid, have regarded the passage as partly interpolated by a Christian hand. A third class of critics think it an entire interpolation (so Schürer and Niese). I think this last-named view is the correct one.

First of all, it is clear that Josephus could not have written in this way unless he had been a Christian. W. Whiston, professor of mathematics in Cambridge, did indeed believe that Josephus changed his faith and died as bishop of Jerusalem; but we have no evidence for this. And a Jew could scarcely have written the words at the beginning of the passage: "if we really may call him a man." This expression is not parallel to that other in which Josephus calls the courage of a soldier named Julian "superhuman," or to that where he speaks of the figure of little Moses as divine.³ In these passages surely he speaks figuratively; here, on the contrary, the writer really doubts whether Jesus may be called a man. Josephus might have spoken of the miracles of Jesus, but only a Christian could have written that his adherents accepted *the* truth. In the same way the opinion that this man was Christ could have been announced only by an adherent. Even Kneller thinks that originally it was written: "This man was the so-called Christ." For if Josephus intended only to say, "he is the man who is known to you Romans by the name of Christ" (so Ranke), then the name of Christ and of the Christians must be supposed to have been known to wide circles, and even this

³ *Wars*, VI, 1, 8 [82]; *Antiquities*, II, 9, 7 [232].

is doubtful. But then the prophecies of the Old Testament referring to the Messiah are said to have found their fulfilment in Jesus; would the writer try by means of this statement to shift from the Jews to the Christians the suspicion which those expectations created in the mind of the Romans? Would not Josephus either have been silent about these things, as he was at another place (yet to be treated of), or else have expressed his opinion more clearly? For as it was, scarcely anybody could understand him. Moreover, if by thinking of those prophecies he wanted to free the "chief men of his people" from suspicion, he should have pointed out that the Old Testament prophecies referred to the death of the Messiah. But he speaks only of his resurrection and of a thousand other wonderful things. And even if this was not the case, according to the belief of the time those prophecies point certainly to the Messiah. Therefore, if they were fulfilled in Christ, then he truly was the Messiah—and no one will ever imagine that Josephus could have believed him to be the Messiah. At any rate, the passage as we know it cannot be as originally written by Josephus; it is either wholly or in part interpolated.

Two arguments are generally quoted for the latter opinion, as well as for the genuineness of the whole passage:

1. The first one is founded upon the good transmission of our passage. Not only is it read in all known manuscripts of Josephus, but from the time of Eusebius down, it has been quoted by the Christian fathers. It is true the testimony of the manuscripts does not prove much; for Books 18–20 of the *Antiquities* are preserved by only three manuscripts, of which the oldest belongs to the eleventh century. But also the so-called epitome of the writings of Josephus, belonging to the ninth or tenth century, the Latin translation, and the so-called Hegesippus know our passage; while, on the contrary, the Christian fathers living before Eusebius do not seem to have any knowledge of it. Origen especially says in two places that Josephus did not believe in Jesus. But though this does not prove that Origen read in our passage "he was the so-called Christ,"⁴ yet it might be possible that Origen overlooked this passage, as many later writers did; and this is possible, for he was ignorant of many things which

⁴ For if he did, then Josephus ought at least to have been mentioned in Origen's book against Celsus, where all is collected that Josephus says about Christianity.

are of interest for the interpretation of the gospels and can clearly be read in Josephus. At all events, we cannot take for granted that our passage must have existed at the time of Origen; nor can we prove that it was to be found in the archetypes of our manuscripts of Josephus about the middle of the second century, from which all our manuscripts seem to be derived. For though, as we saw above, all of them contain it, yet it may have slipped into several at the same time, or it may have been copied from one manuscript into the others. Further, the short tables of contents, most likely belonging to the time of the Antonines, and not only mentioning the most important things, but even minor matters, do not take notice of our passage. It is true, they do not mention either the passages relating to John the Baptist and to Theudas the revolutionist (passages which I shall soon discuss), and only of the first one can it be said that it is included in another passage. But, although these arguments cannot prove the late origin of the Christ passage in Josephus, they are supported by the silence of Josephus' earlier work, the *Wars of the Jews*. In the first two books of the *Wars* nearly the whole narrative contained in the *Antiquities* referring to Judea is given, but this striking passage about Jesus is missing. It is true, the list of the Roman procurators between Coponius and Pilatus, and the list of the Jewish high-priests and the history of the temple, are also wanting; but all this is of another kind and not striking. Only the story about Theudas is missing without any evident cause; therefore the authenticity of the passage about Jesus is not disproved by its absence from the *Wars*. But, considering that it does not appear here, nor in the *Argumenta*, nor in many of the Christian fathers, the coincidence of all these different evidences makes probable its later origin. Thus the first argument for the authenticity of our passage is changed into one against it.

2. In a later portion of his *Antiquities*,⁵ Josephus relates that after the death of Porcius Festus, Ananus the high-priest had ordered James, the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ, and some others, to be stoned to death. As this title in itself does not seem intelligible, some suppose that Josephus must have spoken of Jesus Christ earlier, that is, in *Antiquities*, XVIII, 3, 3. It is true, the later passage is also

⁵ XX, 9, 1 [200].

supposed to be not genuine, especially because Origen, who three times mentions Josephus' account of the death of James, read it differently. But, first, it is by no means certain that Origen read this passage in the form in which we know it; yet, even if he did, it does not follow that because this later passage is unauthentic, the earlier one is also unauthentic.

Moreover, the different account of Hegesippus cannot be quoted against the authenticity of the passage in Josephus. In the first place, they do not necessarily differ in chronology; but even if that were the case, Josephus would be trusted above Hegesippus; all the more because the time at which Josephus places James's death was suitable to such a judicial murder. It has even been thought that the Jews wanted to make up by his death for the escape of Paul, who the year before had eluded them by his appeal to the emperor. But although this must remain doubtful, the genuineness of the passage about James need not be abandoned; and it seems to support the former passage about Christ, for how should we otherwise understand the phrase "the so-called Christ?" It is true that some have supposed the phrase a distinguishing cognomen—in the same way as in the book of Acts Joseph, who is proposed as Judas' successor, has the surname of Barnabas, and Justus, in the Epistle to the Colossians a companion of Paul, has the surname of Jesus. Indeed, three years ago an inscription was published in the *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, in which the name of Christ is used as the cognomen of a Roman. But if the name here had to be understood in this way, Josephus might have chosen another expression; instead of "the so-called Christ," he might have said: "With the cognomen of Christ." If he did not do that, he should have explained the signification of that title. But it is not Josephus' custom always to speak with such accuracy. For example, he relates⁶ that Antiochus of Comagene had been reinstated by Emperor Claudius, but we look in vain for the detailed story of his removal by Gaius. Moreover, one could expect that if Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, 3, 3, spoke of Jesus Christ, he would expressly have referred in XX, 9, 1 to his previous quotation, as he does in other places. But even if this should not be absolutely necessary, the first passage is by no means presupposed by the

⁶ *Antiquities*, XVIII, 8, 4 [276].

second; for also here, as we saw, the title of Christ is not at all interpreted. So at any rate, the genuineness of the earlier passage cannot be proved from the later; moreover, the reason against it, into which the first reason for it has been changed, is supported by two other arguments, the first of which especially makes it seem impossible that it was only worked over in a later time.

1. If we consider the context of the passage about Christ, it is evident that in a general sense this passage suits it fairly well; but if we go into particulars, we find that it very disagreeably interrupts the context; because what follows reads thus: "About the same time another fearful event excited the Jews;" but the appearance of Christ could not be so described. On the other side, this last-mentioned note fits in exceedingly well with what we read before about the revolutions of the Jews caused by Pilatus; it must therefore originally have followed immediately upon that passage.

2. The whole style and character of the passage can scarcely be attributed to Josephus. It is true the differences in his manner of writing would not be decisive, and also the expression "our chief men" could be explained. But the manner in which Jesus is spoken of completely differs from the practice of Josephus. While concerning Judas of Galilee, John the Baptist, Theudas and the Egyptian, he states their origin, manner of living, and the cause of their death, all that is omitted here. This could be well done by a later Christian writer, but not by a Jew writing for Roman readers. Of course, it might still be possible that in the place of the verses which we find in our editions there were originally some other sentences. But that this was the testimony about Christ which we find in the Acts of the so-called Religious Dispute at the Court of the Sassanides (and several times in later writings) is disproved by the fact that, as we have seen, vs. 65 has to follow immediately on vs. 62. Josephus never mentions Jesus Christ (the later passages about James excepted). The motive for silence was certainly in part that he did not know any details about him, and what he knew did not seem to him important enough to mention. Also, his predecessor, Justus of Tiberias, did not speak of Jesus, so far as we know.

But Josephus' silence can even better be explained. The hopes of the Messiah seemed politically dangerous to the Romans; there-

fore Josephus spoke of them as little as possible. When he could not help mentioning them, he did not hesitate to indicate them as the cause of the Jewish war against the Romans.⁷ And, in another place, too, where he should have referred to them, he simply passed them over in silence. It is this passage we have to speak of now.

II

Josephus, in an important passage,⁸ speaks of John the Baptist thus:

Herod killed him, an excellent man, who exhorted and admonished the Jews to live virtuously, to practice justice toward each other and piety toward God, and to come to baptism. . . . But because all the others came to him (for they were much stirred by his sermons), Herod was afraid that his mighty influence upon the crowd might incite an insurrection (for upon his advice they seemed ready to do anything). Therefore he thought it much better to anticipate by an execution these endeavors to cause an uprising than, in the case of a revolution, to have to regret his having fallen into difficulties. So, upon the suspicion of Herod, John was fettered and sent to Machærus, and there he was killed.

This account of Josephus is not only in harmony with that of the gospels, but it also serves as a supplement to their reports. First of all, we hear from him where John was beheaded. Indeed, some have tried to build up out of this passage and that which follows, a new chronology of the life of Jesus, differing from the one which the Gospel of Luke gives (chap. 3). But this—as by this time nearly all acknowledge—has proved a failure. Nor can we date Paul's flight from Damascus, of which we read in 2 Cor. 11:11 f., by what Josephus relates here about Aretas. For, in the first place, it is not certain that by this time he owned the town; and even if we could accept this, we do not know how and when he took possession of it; and if we also succeeded in finding that out, it would not yet be certain whether the flight of Paul took place at the end of his first or of his second stay at Damascus, both of which the epistle to the Galatians mentions. And so we have advanced no farther with our chronology.

It is, however, self-evident that we can gain very much information from Josephus, not only about the Herods, but also about the high-priests and the procurators. Three instances will illustrate this:

⁷ *Wars*, VI, 5, 4 [313].

⁸ *Antiquities*, XVIII, 5, 2 [117 ff.].

an episode from the life of Agrippa I, a passage of Gamaliel's speech (Acts, chap. 5), and a note from the time of Felix the procurator.

1. Of Agrippa I the Acts speak as follows:

Upon a set day he arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying: The voice of a God and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Josephus⁹ does not know anything of this angel, or of Agrippa's special illness; but otherwise his account fully agrees with that of the Acts, and serves to confirm it.

2. On the other hand, there is surely a disagreement when Gamaliel says of Theudas that he made his insurrection before these days, even also before the census, while Josephus¹⁰ transfers this event to the time of Fadus, that is to say, not only after the census, but also after this speech. To be sure, some declare this passage of Josephus partly interpolated, or postulate another Theudas; but this is impossible, because even the words of the passage are similar to those of the Acts. The only question is, which of the two accounts is the original one; and the answer must be, Josephus'. For Josephus explains why the Acts has Theudas' insurrection come before the census. Immediately after the narrative of Theudas, Josephus speaks of the sons of Judas the Galilean, who had made an insurrection at the time of the census. The author of the Acts takes these sons for their father, and therefore transfers Theudas to a yet earlier time. So in this case we have to correct the account of the Acts from the account of Josephus; and we are able to see at the same time how the Acts discrepancy originated.

3. Lastly, we read in Josephus¹¹ that Felix got his wife with the help of a Jewish magician from Cyprus. At first this seems to have no bearing upon what we read in the Acts. Some interpreters, indeed, supposing that the name of the man was Simon, have seen in him the archetype of Simon Magus. But, on the one hand, it is very likely that this Simon Magus, as he is described in the Acts, is historical; and, on the other hand, it is not at all sure that this

⁹ *Antiquities*, XIX, 8, 2 [344 ff.].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XX, 5, 1 [97 ff.].

¹¹ *Ibid.*, XX, 7, 2 [142 f.].

Jew from Cyprus was called Simon. Our best manuscript of the last three books of the *Antiquities* and the epitome (ninth or tenth century) call him Atomos; and although that cannot be his real name (for no Jew could be called the uncircumcised), it helps us to find what his real name was. Only the so-called β text of the Acts, as reconstructed by Blass, supplies at Acts 13:6 the original reading. For Bariesus and Elymas, as this magician is called in our common text, are not synonymous; but Etoimos or Paratus, as he is called in some of the Western manuscripts, can indeed be regarded as a translation of Bariesus. Now, it is unlikely that two different Jewish magicians from Cyprus were at the same time in the suite of two Roman procurators; therefore this Etoimos-Bariesus was probably identical with the one mentioned by Josephus. That is to say, he left Sergius Paulus at a later time and was attached to Felix; indeed, it may be that he was recommended by the one to the other. In this case we also understand better why Drusilla¹² took such an interest in Paul; perhaps she had heard from her confessor (if we may so call him) of the earlier meeting between Bariesus and Paul.

On the other hand, some scholars have sought light from Josephus on the difficult passage, Matt. 23:35. It is true, the Old Testament does not know that "Zacharias, the son of Barachias," was murdered between the temple and the altar; for the Zacharias who, according to 2 Chron. 24:20 ff., was stoned to death in the forecourt of the temple was the son of Jehoida. But the other Zacharias, who, according to Josephus,¹³ met his death in the temple two years before the destruction of Jerusalem, is called son of Baruch only by inferior manuscripts; in the best manuscripts he is called the son of Bareis. Therefore the best explanation of the father's name in the Gospel of Matthew is that this Zacharias was confused with the prophet Zacharias, the son of Barachias. That is to say, we cannot use this passage as an argument to show that the composition of the Gospel of Matthew took place after the year 70 A. D.

III

But numerous other passages of the New Testament are indeed explained to us by Josephus, even when he does no more than relate

¹² Acts 24:24.

¹³ Wars, IV, 5, 4 [335 ff.].

similar events. We begin by noticing references to the Old Testament which differ from the accounts contained in the Massoretic text.

One of the first incidents referred to in this way is the story of Noah. We do not read in Genesis that Noah preached to his contemporaries, but in the second epistle of Peter he is called "herald of justice." Similarly, Josephus¹⁴ relates that Noah did whatever he could to change the minds of the people and bring them back to a better living.

Especially numerous are the parallels to Stephen's apology (Acts, chap. 7). Krebs gives this chapter special attention. Here we read that God said to Abraham, before he went to Haran: "Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee." According to Gen., chap. 12, these words of God were spoken to Abraham after he went to Haran. But Josephus¹⁵ agrees with Acts. Later on Stephen calls Moses "mighty in words," contradicting the Exodus account, but Josephus¹⁶ agrees with him again. Further, we read in Josephus¹⁷ that the law was given by angels, an idea found also in Acts, Paul, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That Balaam advised the Midianites to seduce the children of Israel to idolatry is only once¹⁸ hinted at; but in detail it is given by Josephus,¹⁹ and only in the light of his account can we understand what the Apocalypse relates of Balaam, and the allusions contained in the first and second epistles of Peter.

But Josephus is above all an authority for the period in which he himself lived, a period to which belongs also the composition of most of the New Testament writings. Certainly we learn much from him about the geography of the Holy Land and about the city of Jerusalem. I will refer here to but one detail, which we can understand only with the help of Josephus (other authorities do not help us). The pinnacle, or better, the wing of the temple, which is spoken of in the description of Jesus' temptations, was probably that hall, situated in the south of the temple court, of which Josephus²⁰ says

¹⁴ *Antiquities*, I, 3, 1 [74].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 7, 1 [154].

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 12, 2 [271]; III, 1, 4 [17 ff.].

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, XV, 5, 3 [136].

¹⁸ Numb. 31:16.

¹⁹ *Antiquities*, IV, 6, 6 ff. [126 ff.].

²⁰ *Ibid.*, XV, 11, 5 [412].

it towered so high above a deep valley that whoever looked down became giddy, even before his eye reached the bottom of the gloomy depth.

It is not within the compass of the present article to put together the various items of information which we receive from Josephus regarding the observance of the law by the Jews of his time; I mention a single passage of the New Testament. In the Second Epistle to Timothy it is said of this pupil of Paul—who, according to the Acts, was the son of a gentile father but Jewish mother—that from a babe he had known the sacred writings; and in a similar passage in the book of Josephus against Apion²¹ we read: “As we learn the law by heart from the very first awakening of consciousness, it is in some way graven on our hearts.”

Josephus’ description of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes needs considerable correction. He puts them together²² in a way that may easily cause confusion: he calls them philosophical schools,²³ and lastly²⁴ he compares the Pharisees to the Stoics, and the Essenes to the Pythagoreans. While this last assertion has some truth in it, the other comparisons do not agree with what we hear from others, or elsewhere from himself, about the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. He draws these incorrect comparisons in order to impress the gentile readers with the thought that the Jews too had philosophical schools corresponding to their own. In truth, the Pharisees were, as Wellhausen calls them, the artists of religion, who longed to realize the ideal drawn by the scribes for every Jew. This follows from what Josephus himself says about them: “They are thought to differ from all others by the zeal they bestow on the traditions of our fathers.”²⁵ Similarly Paul says of his early pharisaic days: “I advanced in the Jews’ religion beyond many of mine own age in my race, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.” Josephus further²⁶ says of them: “They let all depend upon fate and upon God, and teach that the doing or avoiding of good was almost completely put into the free will of men, but that fate too had its part in every action.” This latter expression is by no means

²¹ II, 18 [178].

²⁴ *Ibid.*, XV, 10, 4 [371] and *Lige*, 2 [12].

²² *Antiquities*, XIII, 5, 9 [171].

²⁵ *Lige*, 38 [191].

²³ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 1, 2 [11].

²⁶ *Wars*, II, 8, 14 [162 f.].

Jewish; but the idea referred to is found in the Judaism of his time, and receives expression in Paul. Lastly, what he tells us of the teaching of the Pharisees about life after death was also common doctrine, namely, that the soul has immortality; that there are beneath the earth rewards and punishments for those who in life give themselves either to virtue or to sin; that eternal imprisonment is the destination of the latter, while for the former there is eternal life.

In this last doctrine the Pharisees were opposed by the Sadducees, who were the representatives of the earlier idea prevailing in the Old Testament, and in other respects, too, rejected the later tradition in favor of the law. Further, Josephus says of the Sadducees:

They deny fate, asserting that it does not exist at all and cannot form the destinies of men; but they ascribe everything to our own deeds, we ourselves being the originators of our happiness and bringing evil upon ourselves by our own imprudence.

Here he is only trying to find a contrast between the philosophical doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees and (as we shall see later on) of the Essenes. In truth, the Sadducees did not theorize at all; they were practical men, politicians, who as such could take only human factors into consideration. Josephus himself alludes to this fact when he says about their teaching that only a few men of the highest position took to it, especially the families to which the highpriests belonged. Therefore we ought not to mention the Pharisees and Sadducees together.

Still less should we put the Essenes as a third party on a similar footing with them; for that was a small party which had not at all the importance of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And, so far as we know, the Essenes did not represent any special philosophy. If Josephus attributes to them faith in an immutable fate, by which the human free will was fully abolished, it is most likely true only that they believed themselves able (as he states in another place) to foretell the future. Also, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul which he attributes to them should perhaps only form a contrast to the faith of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Some scholars think Josephus' whole account of the Essenes to be an interpolation. This may be incapable of proof, but at any rate we ought to be careful in considering the passages mentioned above.

Josephus furnishes to us also various important historical notes, which render the New Testament narrative intelligible and credible. I do not include among these what he relates autobiographically²⁷ of his fourteenth year, that the high-priests and chief men of the town then visited him to inquire from him about the law. Some scholars compare with this account the story of Jesus in the temple when twelve years of age. Yet in the case of Jesus, he does not teach, but hears and asks questions. Further, the account of Josephus is surely told out of conceit, while the account of the Gospel of Luke is self-explanatory. Rather in the teacher of Josephus, Banus, who lived in the wilderness, clothed himself from the trees, ate what he found growing wild, and by day or night often took a bath in cold water, we can see a counterpart of John the Baptist.

To a still larger degree Josephus' writings offer illustrations of the later life of Paul. For example, in Acts, chap. 21, Paul is saved from being murdered by the excited Jerusalem populace by the Roman soldiers who came down from Antonia to the temple court. We can understand this quick military interference when we learn from Josephus²⁸ that a division of soldiers was always on guard in the halls surrounding the temple court during the time of the Jewish festivals, when tumults were of frequent occurrence. Again, what Josephus tells us²⁹ about Albinus reminds us of what we read of Felix in Acts, chap. 24; just as he, to please the Jews, left Paul in prison, so Albinus for the same reason liberated at least the less guilty criminals. Also, the greeting of Paul by the Christians from Rome at the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns³⁰ has its analogy; according to Josephus,³¹ all Roman Jews went to meet Pseudo-Alexander, the pretended son of Herod the Great. And if some are surprised that, according to the end of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul had to wait two years for his verdict, we see in Josephus' autobiography³² that a similar misfortune befell others. In the year 64 A. D. Josephus traveled to Rome to secure the liberation of some priests who had been sent there by Felix; their trial must therefore have pended for at least three years.

²⁷ *Life*, 2 [9].

²⁸ *Antiquities*, XX, 5, 3 [100 f.]; 8, 11 [192].

²⁹ , II, 14, 1 [273]; *Antiquities*, XX, 9, 5 [215].

³⁰ Acts 28:15.

³¹ *Antiquities*, XVII, 12, 1 [330 f.]

³² *Life*, 3 [13 f.].

Further, that Felix did not leave Palestine much earlier than 61 A. D. can be proved (against Eusebius and some modern scholars) from Josephus. As we see from the Acts (and we need not doubt at all the historicity of this statement), Paul, when he was taken prisoner at Jerusalem, was supposed by the tribune Claudius Lysius to be the so-called Egyptian. Now, according to Josephus,³³ this man had appeared not earlier than the reign of Nero—that is to say, after the year 54 A. D. Although Blass, McGiffert, and Turner doubt this statement, it must be considered historical. Then Paul cannot have been taken prisoner earlier than 55 A. D., and Felix cannot have been recalled before 57 A. D. That is to say, we cannot transfer this event to the time from 54 to 56 A. D. Most probably Felix was recalled in the year 61 A. D.³⁴

In view of the foregoing arguments we must conclude that these passages of Josephus are unauthentic which are usually made most of as containing the testimony of Josephus to Christianity. But many other passages remain which assist us to understand, and in one point even to correct, the New Testament. We do well at the present time to turn to these Jewish writings which precede or are contemporary with the New Testament—the so-called apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books. We shall do well also if we give full attention to the writings of Josephus. From all these books we can gather much information concerning primitive Christianity.

³³ , II, 13, 5 [261 ff.]; , XX, 8, 6 [169 ff.].

³⁴ For a full discussion of this problem see my *Paulus: Sein Leben und Wirken* (Giessen, 1904).